



DIRECTIVE 2023-08

May 30, 2023

To: All County Boards of Elections
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Form of the Ballot and Other Requirements for the August 8, 2023 Special Election

SUMMARY

This Directive provides the certified form of the official ballot to be used in the August 8, 2023 Special Election, as well as the schedule for early, in-person voting. Please note that this Directive must be used alongside [Chapter 5 of the Election Official Manual](#) when preparing ballots for this election. [Chapter 5](#) provides specific instructions on the following relevant subjects:

- Ballot format;
- Voter instructions;
- Ballot stubs;
- Questions and issues ballot;
- Ballot proofs;
- Bid requirements;
- Ballot quantities;
- Logic and accuracy testing; and
- Public test.

INSTRUCTIONS

I. VERIFICATION OF PRECINCT CODES

The board must ensure that the Secretary of State's precinct codes (three alphabet letters) are accurate in the tabulation system and the county's voter registration system; and the precinct names correspond between the two systems. Note: It is also critical that a board of elections upload to the statewide voter registration database (SWVRD) any changes made to the precinct and polling location information in the county's voter registration system. The board will receive a report of precinct names and codes in June to review for accuracy.

II. OFFICIAL QUESTIONS AND ISSUES BALLOT

The Official Questions and Issues Ballot must be used for all voting systems to present voters with the statewide issue. The attached ballot form contains the exact ballot language to use for the statewide issue. No other issues will appear on the ballot. Additional instructions on headings, ballot language, and percentage of votes can be found in [Chapter 5](#) of the Election Official Manual.

III. ABSENTEE BALLOTS¹

As a reminder, boards must follow the instructions for proofing the ballot outlined in [Chapter 5](#) of the Election Official Manual. All board members, but especially those who are new to the ballot-proofing process, should read over these provisions to ensure they are familiar with the process.

Each board of elections must have absentee ballots printed and ready for use by Friday, **June 23, 2023** (46 days before the August 8, 2023 Special Election) for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (“UOCAVA”) voters, and by Tuesday, **July 11, 2023** for regular, non-UOCAVA absentee voters.

As provided in [Chapter 7](#) of the Election Official Manual, boards may not outsource the printing and mailing of absentee ballots to vendors or any other third party without prior written authorization from the Director of Elections. The deadline to request outsourcing of absentee ballots is Friday, **June 9, 2023** (60 days before the election).²

Keep in mind that this is the first election in which boards may outsource the printing and mailing of absentee ballots to out-of-state vendors. In order to ensure the highest standards of election security and integrity, boards must comply with all previously enacted requirements related to outsourcing outlined in [Chapter 7](#) of the Election Official Manual. Additional rules and requirements related to ballot printing and mailing will be provided later this year for future elections.

Additionally, each board must ensure all of the following:

- The ballot file provided to a ballot printing vendor is thoroughly reviewed and approved before producing any ballots for use by voters;
- Any absentee ballot that is printed and mailed by a vendor is properly proofed and tested according to the instructions in [Chapter 7](#) of the Election Official Manual;
- The absentee ballots are provided to the Secretary of State’s Office by Thursday, **June 22, 2023** (at least 47 days before the election) via SharePoint;
- The sample ballot on the board’s website is updated by Friday, **June 23, 2023** (at least 46 days before the election);³ and
- The remote ballot marking system is updated and ready for use by Friday, **June 23, 2023**.

IV. VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

The voter registration deadline for the August 8, 2023 Special Election is Monday, **July 10, 2023**. As this is a statewide election, boards must be open until 9:00 p.m. for the purposes of voter registration. Voter registrations received or postmarked by July 10, 2023 must be processed and the voter registration record updated for the August 8, 2023 Special Election. Voter registration forms returned by mail to the Secretary of State’s Office or the board of elections that do not bear a postmark or a legible postmark are valid for the August 8, 2023 Special Election if received by July 14, 2023.⁴

¹ [R.C. 3509.01](#) and [R.C. 3511.04](#).

² See [Advisory 2023-01](#).

³ [R.C. 3511.04\(B\)](#).

⁴ [R.C. 3503.19](#).

V. EARLY VOTING SCHEDULE

Boards must be open for early in-person voting in the August 8, 2023 Special Election as follows:

Weeks One, Two, and Three of Voting (July 11 – July 28, 2023)

- 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on each weekday (Monday through Friday)

Week Four of Voting (July 31 – August 6, 2023)

- 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. (Monday)
- 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Tuesday)
- 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. (Wednesday through Friday)
- 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Saturday)
- 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Sunday)

Absentee ballot applications are due by close of business on the seventh day before Election Day (i.e., 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 1, 2023).

VI. POLLING LOCATIONS

Boards of elections must contact all polling locations to ensure availability for the August 8, 2023 Special Election. Any board that changes polling locations for the August 8, 2023 Special Election must mail notice to registered voters in the precinct(s) and do all of the following:

1. Issue a press release to local media containing information regarding the new polling location;
2. Post a notice in a clear and conspicuous place at the previous polling location that redirects voters to the new polling location;
3. Update the polling location on the board of elections' website;
4. Update the board of elections' voter registration system with the new polling location;
5. Provide the updated precinct and polling location packet to the Secretary of State's Office immediately. Once the packet is sent, email the updated list to SWVRD@OhioSOS.gov;
6. Update the board of elections' election management system, if possible; and
7. Update the board of elections' electronic pollbook, if possible.

VII. PRECINCT ELECTION OFFICIALS

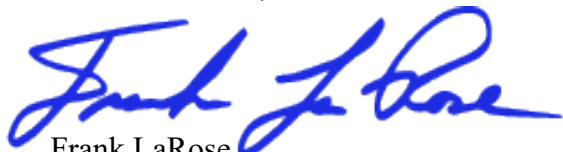
Each new precinct election official must be trained in-person on the county's voting equipment before participating in the person's first election as a precinct election official, and programs of instruction must be scheduled within 60 days before the election (Friday, June 9, 2023). If a precinct election official did not receive training prior to the May 2, 2023 Primary/Special Election, they must receive instruction on the changes to election administration from H.B. 458, including the photo identification requirements, the Affidavit of Religious Objection ([Form 12-O](#)), and changes to the provisional voting process, including the changes to the Provisional Ballot Affirmation ([Form 12-B](#)).

In any election, a board of elections, by a vote of at least three members of the board, may opt to have a single voting location serve more than one precinct. If a multi-precinct voting location uses electronic pollbooks, the board may reduce the number of precinct election officials from four per precinct to two, so long as the board approves the reduction by the affirmative vote of at least three of

its members.⁵

If you have any questions regarding this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank LaRose", with a stylized, cursive script.

Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State

⁵ [R.C. 3501.22\(A\)\(2\)](#).